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ABSTRACT

Invitational education is a theory of practice designed to create a total school environment that intentionally summons people in schools to realize their relatively boundless potential. It addresses the global nature of schools, the entire gestalt. Its purpose is to make schooling a more exciting, satisfying and enriching experience for everyone involved in the educative process. Its method is to offer a guiding theory, a common language of improvement, and a practical means to accomplish its stated purpose. Invitational education is centered on four propositions based on trust, respect, optimism, and intentionality. It is based on two successive foundations: the perceptual tradition and the self-concept theory. Invitational education identifies the following levels of functioning: intentionally disinviting, unintentionally disinviting, intentionally inviting, and the highest level, the plus factor. Everyone functions at each level from time to time, but it is the level at which one typically functions that determines one's approach to life and one's success in personal and professional living. An example of the successful operation of this approach--at a public junior high school in North Carolina--is described in detail. Invitational education is finding its way into health care facilities, management work places, and parenting. Wherever it goes, it carries a basic message that human potential, not always evident, is always there, waiting to be discovered and invited forth. Equally important, invitational education offers a concrete, practical, and successful way to accomplish its purposes. (ABL)

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What Is Invitational Education and How Does It Work?

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Invitational Education has a much wider focus of application than is typically discussed in other self-theories. It is deliberately aimed at broader goals than students and their achievement alone. It is geared to the total development of all who interact within the school. It is concerned with more than grades, attendance and even perceptions of self. It is concerned with the skills of becoming.

William Stafford, Ed.D.
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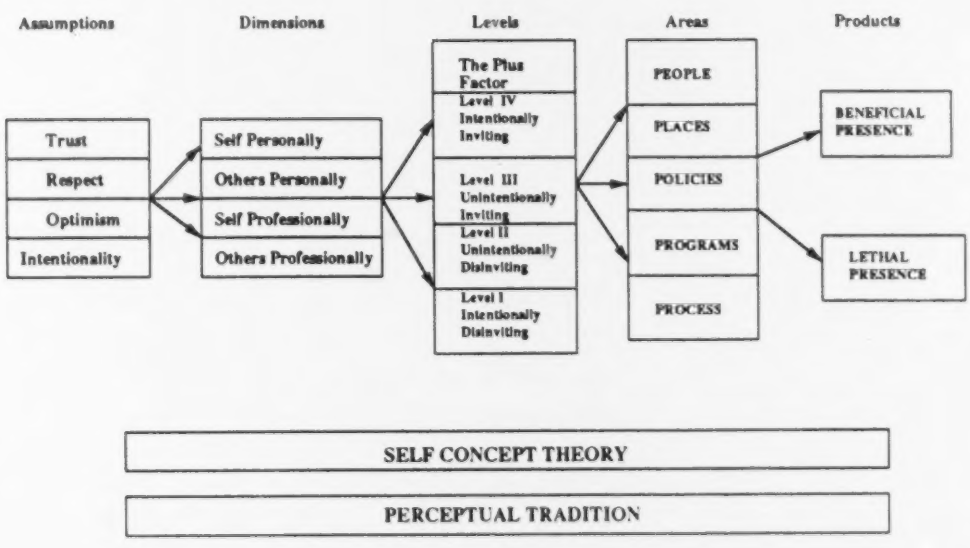
Invitational Education (Purkey & Novak, 1984; 1988; Purkey & Stanley, 1991) is a theory of practice designed to create a total school environment that intentionally summons people in schools to realize their relatively boundless potential. It addresses the global nature of schools, the entire gestalt. Its purpose is to make schooling a more exciting, satisfying and enriching experience for everyone involved in the educative process. Its method is to offer a guiding theory, a common language of improvement, and a practical means to accomplish its stated purpose.

The following diagram highlights the major qualities of Invitational Education. It will be helpful to keep this diagram in mind as Invitational Education's Assumptions, dimensions, foundations, levels, areas and products are introduced.



FOUNDATIONS OF INVITATIONAL EDUCATION

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Invitational Education is unlike any other system reported in the professional literature in that it provides an overarching framework for a variety of educational approaches to school improvement that fit with its basic assumptions.

Basic Assumptions of Invitational Education

Invitational Education is centered on four assumptions that give it purpose and direction. These assumptions are in the form of four propositions based on trust, respect, optimism, and intentionality.

Trust

Education is a cooperative, collaborative activity where process is as important as product. A basic ingredient of Invitational Education is a recognition of the interdependence of human beings. Attempting to get others to do what is wanted without involving them in the process is a lost cause. Even if the effort to control people without their cooperation is successful, the energy expended is usually disproportionate to what is accomplished. Each individual is the highest authority on his or her personal existence. Given an optimally inviting environment, each person will find his or her own best ways of being and becoming.

Respect

People are able, valuable, and responsible and should be treated accordingly. An indispensable element in any successful school is shared responsibility based on mutual respect. This respect is manifested in the caring and appropriate behaviors exhibited by everyone in the school as well as the places, policies, programs and processes they create and maintain.

Optimism

People possess untapped potential in all areas of human endeavor. The uniqueness of human beings is that no clear limits to potential have been discovered. Invitational Education could not be seriously considered if optimism regarding human potential did not exist. It is not enough to be inviting; it is critical to be optimistic about the process. No one in a school: not a student, teacher, principal, counselor, parent, librarian, supervisor, or whoever, can choose a beneficial direction in life without hope that change for the better is possible. From an Invitational Education viewpoint, seeing people as possessing untapped potential in all areas of human endeavor determines the curricula devised, the policies established, the programs supported, the processes encouraged, the physical environments created and the relationships established and maintained.

Intentionality

Human potential can best be realized by places, policies, processes, and programs specifically designed to invited development, and by people who are intentionally inviting with themselves and others, personally and professionally. An invitation is defined as an intentional act designed to offer something beneficial for consideration. Intentionality gives meaning to experience. It enables educators to create and maintain consistently caring and appropriate schools characterized by purpose and direction. It takes intentionality to consistently and dependably invite the realization of human potential.

The four essential propositions of Invitational Education: **Trust, respect, optimism**, and **intentionality** offer a consistent "stance" through which educators and others can create and maintain an optimally inviting environment. While there are other elements that contribute to Invitational Education, these propositions are key ingredients.

The Four Dimensions

The goal of Invitational Education is to encourage educators to enrich their lives in each of four basic dimensions: (1) being personally inviting with oneself, (2) being personally inviting with others, (3) being professionally inviting with oneself, and (4) being professionally inviting with others. LIke pistons in a finely-tuned automobile engine, the four dimensions work together to give power to the whole movement. While there are times when one of the four dimensions may demand special attention, the overall goal is synchronization to orchestrate these dimensions to seek balance and harmony.. Each dimension is vital in Invitational Education because each contributes to a balance between personal and professional functioning.

Being personally inviting with oneself. To be a beneficial presence in the lives of students it is essential that educators first invite themselves. This means that they seek to view themselves as able, valuable and responsible and to be open to experience and living. Being personally inviting with oneself takes an endless variety of forms. It means caring for one's mental health and making appropriate choices in life.

By taking up a new hobby, relaxing with a good book, exercising regularly, learning to laugh more, visiting friends, getting sufficient sleep, growing a garden, or managing time wisely, educators can rejuvenate their own well-being. It is difficult to be inviting with others without first being inviting with oneself. Educators who adopt the Invitational Education model seek to reinvent and respirit themselves personally.

Being personally inviting with others. Being inviting requires that the feelings, wishes, aspirations of others be taken into account. Without this, Invitational Education would not exist. In practical terms, this means that the social committee might be the most vital committee in any school, for one's own well-being is dependent on the well-being of everyone in the school. It also means to accept others and to maintain an optimistic view of humanity.

Specific ways to be inviting with others are simple but often overlooked. Getting to know colleagues on a social basis, sending friendly notes, forming a carpool, remembering birthdays, enjoying hoopla at a faculty party, practicing politeness, celebrating successes are all examples of Invitational Education in action.

Being professionally inviting with oneself. Being professionally inviting with oneself can take a variety of forms, but it begins with ethical awareness, a clear and efficient perception of situations and oneself. In practical terms, being professionally inviting with oneself means trying a new teaching method, seeking certification, learning new techniques, returning to graduate school, enrolling in a workshop, attending conferences, reading journals, writing for publication, making presentations at conferences, are just tips of the iceberg.

Invitational Education requires that educators not "rust" on their laurels. Keeping alive professionally is particularly important for educators because of the rapidly expanding knowledge base regarding teaching and learning. Perhaps never before in North American Education have knowledge, techniques, and methods been so bountiful. Canoes must be paddled harder than ever just to keep up with the knowledge explosion. Invitational Education involves not only encounters with students in caring and appropriate ways. It also involves the educator's relationship with the content of what is being taught, continually seeking ways to make subject matter come alive for students.

Being professionally inviting with others. The final dimension of Invitational Education (and most important to students and parents), is being professionally inviting with others. This involves such qualities as treating people, not as labels, or groups. It also requires honesty and the ability to accept less-than-perfect behavior of human beings.

In everyday practice, being professionally inviting with others requires careful attention to the polices that are enforced, the programs established, the places created, the processes manifested, and the behaviors exhibited. Among the countless ways that educators can be professionally inviting with others is to have high aspirations, fight sexism and racism in any form, work cooperatively, provide professional feedback, and maintain an optimistic stance. A good way to do this is to establish inviting teams in schools, each team focusing on one of the five areas found

in any school: People, Places, Policies, Programs and Processes. These areas will be p;resented later in this chapter.

Professionals who work to balance and orchestrate the four dimensions of Invitational Education into a seamless whole are well on their way to mastering Invitational Education. The successful educator is one who artfully blends the four dimensions to sustain energy and enthusiasm for teaching, learning and living.

It will be helpful to pause at this point and briefly explain the two theoretical foundations of Invitational Education: The perceptual tradition and self-concept theory.

The Two Foundations of Invitational Education

Invitational Education is based on two successive foundations: The Perceptual Tradition and Self-Concept Theory. These two perspectives give substance and structure for Invitational Education.

The Perceptual Tradition. The bedrock of Invitational Education is the perceptual tradition. This tradition maintains that human behavior is the product of the unique ways that individuals view the world. The perceptual viewpoint places consciousness at the center of the concept of personality. It proposes that people are not bothered by events so much as their perception of events. The perceptual tradition was beautifully presented in the 1962 Yearbook of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Perceiving, Behaving, Becoming, edited by A.W. Combs. In Invitational Education, a most important question is "What is the fit between educators' perceptions and students' perceptions?"

Self-concept theory. Self concept is a complex and dynamic system of learned beliefs that each individual holds to be true about his or her own personal existence. The second foundation is self-concept theory. This theory proposes that behavior is mediated by the ways an individual view oneself and serves as both an antecedent and consequence of human activity.

Invitational Education offers a logical extension to the perceptual tradition and self-concept theory and builds on these two foundations. These foundations are in turn supported by a vast research literature.

Levels of Functioning

In addition to centering itself on trust, respect, optimism and intentionality and building on the perceptual tradition and self-concept theory, Invitational Education identifies levels of functioning. Everyone functions at each level from time to time, but it is the level at which one typically functions that determines one's approach to life and ones' success in personal and professional living.

It is useful here to contemplate the complexity of Invitational Education. Many educators think they already understand the concept of "inviting." They see it as simply doing nice things--sharing a smile, giving a hug, saying something nice, or buying a gift. But Invitational Education is far more than giving "warm fuzzies" sharing "strokes,' forming "hug stations," or walking around with IALAC sheets. While these are worthwhile activities when used caringly and appropriately, they are only manifestations of a theoretical "stance" one takes. This stance determines the level of personal and professional functioning. The following levels provide the basis for a check system to monitor each of the "Five P's" (places, policies, programs, processes, and people) found in and around any school.

Intentionally Disinviting. The most negative and toxic level of human functioning involves those actions, policies, programs, places, and processes that are deliberately designed to demean, dissuade, discourage, defeat and destroy. A classical example of intentionally disinviting behavior in action may be seen in the play Amadeus. It is Salieri who is intentionally disinviting-with great skill-to destroy Mozart.

In the educational setting intentionally disinviting functioning might be a teacher who is purposely insulting, a school policy that is intentionally discriminatory, a program that purposely demeans students, or an environment intentionally left unpleasant and unattractive.

An illustration of intentionally disinviting functioning was provided by a high school teacher. After attending a workshop on Invitational Education, this teacher sent a note to the principal pointing out that the girl's bathroom needed soap, paper towels and tissue. Her note was returned to her mailbox at the end of the day with this remark written across the bottom (unsigned): "What do you think this place is--the Hilton?" With such an intentionally disinviting stance, is it any wonder that students in this particular school are so apathetic or unruly or that the school has the reputation of being one of the worst in the state?

Unintentionally Disinviting. People, places, policies, programs and processes that are intentionally disinviting are few when compared to those that are unintentionally disinviting. The great majority of disinviting forces that exist in and around schools are the result of a lack of stance. Because there is no philosophy of trust, respect, optimism, and intentionality, schools policies are established, programs designed, places arranged, processes evolve and people behave in ways that are clearly disinviting although such was not the intent.

Schools that typically function at the unintentionally disinviting level spend a lot of time wondering "Why do we have such a high dropout rate?" "Why are the teachers so unhappy in this school?" "Why are our SAT scores so low?" "Why do we have so many discipline problems?" Educators who function at the unintentionally disinviting level are often viewed as uncaring, chauvinistic, condescending, patronizing, sexist, racist, dictatorial, or just plain thoughtless. They do not intend to be hurtful or harmful, but because they lack consistency in direction and purpose, they act in unintentionally disinviting ways. Examples of unintentionally disinviting forces at work can be seen in almost any school. The sign that reads **NO STUDENTS ALLOWED IN SCHOOL BEFORE 8:15 A.M.** (although the temperature is below zero); the policy of reserving the best parking space for the principal; the tendency to answer the office phone with a curt "**Jackson Junior**;" or teachers who consistently kick students "in the but." ("This is a good paper, Mary, **but...**"). Educators who function at the unintentionally disinviting level may not intend to be disinviting, but the damage is done. Like being run over by a truck: intended or not, the victim is still dead.

Unintentionally Inviting. Educators who usually function at the unintentionally inviting level has stumbled serendipitously into ways of functioning that are often effective. However, they have difficulty when asked to explain why they are successful. They can describe in loving detail **what** they do, but not **why**.

An illustration of unintentionally inviting functioning might be seen in the "natural born" teachers. They may be successful in teaching because they exhibit many of the trusting, respecting, and optimistic qualities associated with Invitational Education. However, because they lack the fourth critical element, **intentionality**, they lack consistency and dependability in the actions they exhibit, the policies and programs they establish, and the places and processes they create and maintain. Young educators often function at this unintentionally inviting level. While they are likeable, entertaining, enthusiastic, and graduate just in time to save education, they lack **intentionality** regarding **why** they are doing what they do. Teachers who are unintentionally inviting are somewhat akin to the early barn-storming airplane pilots. These pioneer pilots did not know exactly why their planes flew, or what caused weather patterns, or much about navigational systems. As long as they stayed close to the ground, followed a railway track, and the weather was clear, they were able to function. But when the weather turned bad, or night fell, they quickly landed or became disoriented and lost. In difficult situations, those who function at the unintentionally inviting level lack of dependability in behavior and consistency in direction.

The basic weakness in functioning at the unintentionally inviting level is the inability to identify the reasons for success or failure. Most people know whether something is working or not, but when it stops working, they are puzzled about how to start it up again. Those who function at the unintentionally inviting level lack a consistent stance--a dependable position from which to operate.

Intentionally Inviting. When educators function at the intentionally inviting level they seek to consistently exhibit the assumptions of Invitational Education. A beautiful example of intentionality in action is presented by Mizer (1964) who described how schools can function to

turn a child "into a zero." Mizer illustrated the tragedy of one such child, then concluded her article with these words (p. 10).

> I look up and down the rows carefuily each September at the unfamiliar faces. I look for veiled eyes or bodies scrounged into an alien world. "Look, Kids," I say silently, "I may not do anything else for you this year, but not one of you is going to come out of here a nobody. I'll work or fight to the bitter end doing battle with society and the school board, but I won't have one of you coming out of here thinking of himself as a zero."

Intentionality can be a tremendous asset for educators, for it is a constant reminder of what is truly important in education.

In Invitational Education, **everybody** and **everything** adds to, or subtracts from, connecting with students. Ideally, the factors of people, places, policies, programs, and processes should be so intentionally inviting as to create a world where each individual is cordially summoned to develop physically, intellectually, and emotionally. Those who accept the assumptions of Invitational Education not only strive to be intentionally inviting, but once there, continue to grow and develop, to reach for the "Plus Factor."

The Plus Factor. When people watch the accomplished musician, the headline comedian, the world class athletic, the master teacher, what he or she does seems simple. It is only when people try to do it themselves that they realize that true art requires painstaking care, discipline, and deliberate planning. At its best, Invitational Education becomes "invisible" because it becomes a means of addressing humanity. To borrow the words of Chuang-tse, an ancient Chinese Philosopher, "it flows like water, reflects like a mirror, and responds like an echo."

At its best, Invitational Education requires implicit, rather than explicit, expression. When the educator reaches this special plateau of Invitational Education, what he or she does appears effortless. Football teams call it "momentum," comedians call it "feeling the center," world class athletes call it "finding the zone." Fighter pilots call it "rhythm." In Invitational Education it is called the **Plus Factor**; and a good example of this factor in action was provided by Ginger Rogers, A famous actress and dancer.

When Ginger Rogers described dancing with Fred Astair, she said, "It's a lot of hard work, that I do know." Someone responded: "But it doesn't look it, Ginger." Ginger replied "That's why it's magic." Invitational Education, at its best, works like magic. Educators who function at the highest levels of inviting become so fluent that the carefully-honed skills and techniques they employ are invisible to the untrained eye. They function with such talented assurance that the tremendous effort involved does not call attention to itself. As Ovid explained in his **Art of Love, Ars est celare artem** (Art lies in concealing art). To accomplish this magic mission, Invitational Education focuses on the five areas that exist in every school and that contribute to the success or failure of every student.

The Five Areas

In the same way as everyone and everything in hospitals should invite health, so everyone and everything in every school setting should invite the realization of human potential. This involves the people, places, policies, programs and processes. These five "P's" make up the educational ecosystems in which individuals exist.

People. While everything in life adds to, or detracts from, human success or failure, nothing is more important in life than people. It is the people who create a respectful, optimistic, trusting and intentional society.

Places. The physical environment of the school offers an excellent starting point for moving from theory into practice, because places are so visible. Almost any one can recognize smelly restrooms, cluttered offices, peeling paint, or unkempt buildings. Fortunately, places are the easiest to change because they are the most obvious element in any school environment. They also offer the opportunity for immediate improvement.

Policies. Policies refer to the procedures, codes, rules, written or unwritten, used to regulate the ongoing functions of individuals and organizations. Ultimately, the policies created and maintained communicate a strong message regarding the value, ability, and responsibility of people.

Programs. Programs have an important part to play in implementing Invitational Education because they often focus on narrow goals that neglect the wider scope of human needs. For example, special programs that label people can give individuals self perceptions that negate the positive purposes for which these programs were originally created. Invitational Education requires that programs be constantly monitored to insure that they do not detract from the goals for which they were designed.

Processes. The final, "P," processes, addresses the ways in which the other four "P's" function. Processes address such issues as cooperative spirit, democratic activities, collaborative efforts, and humane activities. They focus on how the other "P's" are conducted.

The first half of this chapter has presented Invitational Education as a guiding theory based on trust, respect, optimism and intentionality. Invitational Education offers a common language for school improvement involving dimensions, levels, and areas of functioning based on the perceptual tradition and self-concept theory. The second part of this chapter demonstrates how Invitational Education works.

How Invitational Education Works

Invitational Education has been applied in many diverse educational settings, including elementary and secondary schools, entire school systems, and in higher education (Purkey & Schmidt, 1990). In addition, over one hundred schools throughout the United States and Canada have received the "Inviting School Award" presented by the International Alliance for Invitational Education, centered at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. A list of these schools may be obtained by contracting the Alliance at UNC-Greensboro.

It will be useful to take an in-depth look at one public junior high school in North Carolina where Invitational Education has been adopted. The school is Douglas Byrd Junior High School, Cumberland County, North Carolina. Because of its many challenges, Byrd was an excellent testing ground for Invitational Education.

Douglas Byrd Junior High School

Douglas Byrd Junior High School is the largest junior high school in Cumberland County, and the 7th largest junior high school in North Carolina. It is 59% Caucasian, 34% Afro-American, 4% Native American, 2% Hispanic and 1% Asian. Over 50% are on free or reduced lunch, 38% are listed under Chapter I, and over 50% are classified as at-risk. Of the twelve Cumberland County Junior High Schools, Douglas Byrd had, as of June, 1990, the highest dropout rate, the highest absentee rate, and raked among the bottom of the twelve schools in California Achievement Test Scores.

Teachers and Administrators at Byrd had worked hard over the years but indicated frustration at reaching at-risk youth with conventional strategies in the classroom. Administrators and support staff expressed great concern over the proportion of time spent on crisis intervention. Parents of failing students voiced frustration and the desire to help, but felt overwhelmed by the lack of other parents willing or able to engage themselves in the school. The professionals of Douglas Byrd in the spring of 1990 were dedicated but were frustrated by the continued challenges and disappointments.

The STAR Project

The introduction of Invitational Education at Byrd Junior High School became possible, in part, by a grant from RJR Nabisco. In 1990 the company initiated the Next Century Schools program. The goal of RJR Nabisco was to stimulate bold, visionary, sustainable change in public education.

The grant money enabled Byrd to organize two pilot classes called STAR--Students Together Achieving Recognition. This involved a "school within a school" demonstration site for at-risk youth. The 38 students in the STAR classes were recommended by their sixth grade teachers. The students had a wide range of academic achievement levels, but their elementary teachers thought they might have difficulty in adapting to a large junior high school with over 1,300 students.

STAR was designed to help increase standardized test scores and cut back dropout rates, not only for the two pilot classes, but for the whole school. The goal of STAR was to create a total school environment which enhances the abilities, strengths, and worth of everyone who lives and works at Douglas Byrd Junior High School. Invitational Education was chosen as the best model to facilitate a climate of shared decision-making and shared responsibility. The hope was that the project would expand and impact on the entire school population.

Introduction of Invitational Education

When Douglas Byrd Junior High School received notification of their RJR Nabisco grant, the Principal, STAR Project Director, and central office administrators contacted the author of this chapter. They had concluded, after reviewing materials on numerous workable models and strategies ("The Comer Process," "Higher Order Thinking Skills," and "Learning Styles,

and others) that Invitational Education offered the best hope of systemically transforming Douglas Byrd Junior High School.

In a series of meetings held during the summer of 1990, a team of educators from Byrd Junior High School met with the author to establish plans whereby Invitational Education could be adopted by Byrd Junior High. The plans included a one-day opening-of-school celebration involving Byrd educators, students, and parents, a leadership training program on Invitational Education at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and a continuing series of small-group workshops to be held at Byrd.

The Opening-of-School Celebration. In August of 1990 all Byrd teachers and staff, six Invitational Education Consultants, and representative groups of Byrd Parents and Students gathered at a Fayetteville hotel for a full-day inservice. It was considered important to get everyone away from Byrd in order to "break the mold" of traditional thinking. At this meeting all participants were introduced to the concept of Invitational Education, given a Phi Delta Kappa Fastback (Purkey & Novak, 1988) and divided equally into five "P Strands." (People, Places, Policies, Programs, and Processes). Each strand was facilitated by a consultant on Invitational Education who specialized in a particular Strand. Each of the five Strands considered three questions that related to its particular "P": (1) What are we doing well already. (2) What could we do better, and (3) How do we do it? The day also featured entertainment by Byrd Faculty and lunch at the hotel. Strands listed their ideas on newsprint and presented their thoughts to the entire group. These were typed up and served as an initial action plan. Each strand group and its Invitational Education consultant formed a team that worked together at intervals throughout the school year.

Leadership Training at UNCG

In addition to ongoing small group workshops at Byrd Junior High School conducted by Invitational Education consultants with their P Strands, five leaders of each "P Strand" traveled to Greensboro for a full-day training session. This session employed the "Five P Relay" The relay involves (1) placing participants in their P groups, (2) having each group set five clearly defined "do-able" goals, (3) circulating their goals through the other four groups in turn who identify possible obstacles and ways to overcome these obstacles, (4) returning the list of goals, obstacles, and ways to overcome obstacles to the original P group. Each of the five groups then developed an action plan. The Five P Relay allowed everyone to have input accept ownership for all five P's.

Continuing In-service Workshops at Byrd

At intervals throughout the 1990-91 school year, the five P Strands came together with their Invitational Education Consultants to work on their school improvement projects. These projects focused on such areas as classroom discipline, cooperative learning, teaming, and students evaluation. Regardless of focus, the underlying guiding theory and common language were always that of Invitational Education. Invitational Education was the glue that held everything together.

End of Year Success Picnic

A faculty picnic concluded the 1990-91 school year, with singing, games, and hoopla. The picnic was preceded by a closing two-hour seminar where the five Invitational Education Consultant presented their impressions of what had happened during the school year. The successes were impressive.

Abstract of External Evaluation

The major findings of the Invitational Education Component of the STAR Project for 1990-91 were gathered by an external consultant working under contract with the STAR Project at Douglas

Byrd Junior High School. Findings were summarized under the "5-P" Format of Invitational Education: People, Places, Programs, Policies, and Processes. Here are some of the positive results:

People:
* Teacher average daily attendance showed significant improvement in 1990-91.
* Student average daily attendance showed significant improvement in 190-91.
* Parent attendance at PTA meetings increased 100 percent in 1990-91.
* Teacher/student recognition programs were initiated in 1990-91.

Places:
* Significant improvements made in physical environment.
* Significant increase in student use of the library.
* Two new faculty workrooms opened and chain-link fence removed from breezeways.
* Special tables for faculty added in Byrd cafeteria.

Programs:
* Number of dropouts at Byrd decreased by 44% in 1990-91.
* California Achievement Test (CAT) scores improved significantly in 1990-91.
* PSAT scores of ninth graders showed a significant improvement in some areas.
* Fifteen partnerships with civic groups arranged in 1990-91.
* Two student assemblies held in 1989-90, fourteen assemblies held in 1990-91.

Policies:
* In 1989-90 fifteen students received long term suspensions. There nine long-term suspensions in 1990-91.
* Short-term suspensions decreased from 97 to 80.
* In 1989-90, 157 students were retained at grade level; in 1990-91 144 students were retained.

Processes:
* In 1989-90, 220 hours were committed to staff development; in 1990-91 there were 3099 staff development training hours.
* Evaluations on Adjective Checklists, Wayson School Climate and Context Inventory and STAR Project Year End Assessment all indicated significant improvement in faculty and staff morale.
* Not a single Byrd teacher requested a transfer at the end of the 1990-91 school year.

The complete evaluation report may be obtained by contacting the STAR Project, Douglas Byrd Junior High School, Cumberland County Schools, Fayetteville, N.C. 28304. From all indications, the first year of the Invitational Education STAR Project was an overwhelming success, The second year of the project will focus on "Invitational Teaching" and build on these initial successes.

Where is Invitational Education Headed?

A theory is generally considered to be a collection of abstract principles and assumptions that

are offered to explain phenomena. Invitational Education is gradually evolving into a theory of "Invitational Living." This theory offers a way to create total environments that intentionally summon people to realize their relatively boundless potential in all areas of worthwhile human endeavor. Its purpose, as stated in the beginning of this chapter, is to address the global nature of human existence and to make life a more exciting, satisfying and enriching experience.

Increasingly, Invitational Education is finding its way into health care facilities, management work places, and parenting. Wherever it goes, it carries the basic message that human potential, not always evident, is always there, waiting to be discovered and invited forth. Equally important, Invitational Education offers a concrete, practical, and successful way to accomplish its purposes.

Conclusion

This chapter has introduced Invitational Education and explored the process of inviting school success. It described the total gestalt of the school environment consisting of people, places, policies, programs and processes and demonstrated how Invitational Education can influence each of these. While building totally inviting schools is no easy task, they can be created and maintained by educators who are committed to making their schools "the most inviting place in town."

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